

*The CASE of the Cane-Chair Makers humbly Presented to the Consideration of the Honourable the Commons in Parliament Assembled;*

Shewing,



That before Cane-Chairs, Stools, Squobs, and Couches were made in *England*, there was not (according to the largest Information that can be gathered) above One hundred and eighty Persons Employed in Making and Turning of Chair-Frames to be covered with Turkey-work, Serge, Camblets, *Kidderminster*, and other Stuffs of the Woollen Manufacture; there being but little Work in the Making, less Work in the Turning, and generally no Carving at all in those Frames.

That about the Year 1664. Cane-Chairs, &c. came into use in *England*, which gave so great Satisfaction to all the Nobility, Gentry, and Commonalty of this Kingdom, (for their Durableness, Lightness, and Cleanness from Dust, Worms and Moths, which inseparably attend Turkey-work, Serge, and other Stuff-Chairs and Couches, to the spoiling of them and all Furniture near them) that they came to be much used in *England*, and sent to all parts of the World; which occasioned the Chair-Frame Makers and Turners to take many Apprentices; and Cane-Chairs, &c. coming in time to be Carved, many Carvers took Apprentices, and brought them up to Carving of Cane-Chairs, Stools, Couches, and Squobs only: And there were many Apprentices bound only to learn to Split the Canes, and Cane those Chairs, &c.

And as Trade for Cane-Chairs, &c. increased, the People bred up in the several Trades depending upon them also increased, their number being (upon a true Survey) found to be at this day many Thousands of People, many of whom pay very great Rents, and have long Leases of Houses, taken purposely to Make and Sell Cane-Chairs, Stools, Squobs, Couches, Tables, and other Caned Work.

We find (by a true and exact Account) that there is not Six thousand Dozens of Cane-Chairs, Stools, Couches, and Squobs, made in *England* in any one Year, whereof above Two thousand Dozens are yearly Transported into almost all the Hot Parts of the World, where the Heat renders Turkey-work, Serge, *Kidderminster*, and other Stuffed Chairs and Couches useless. Also a very great part of Cane Chairs and Couches, that are used in *England*, are covered with Cushions and Quilts, which consume much Wooll and Silk: Whereby it appears, that the Making and Using is not one eighth part of that Detriment to the Woollen Manufacture, as it is Asserted to be; there being not above Two thousand Dozens of Cane-Chairs made yearly in *England*, but what are either Transported, or covered with Silk or Woollen Manufacture.

It hath been Asserted, That when Turkey-work, Serge, Camblet, *Kidderminster*, and all other Stuffed Chairs, were most in use, there were spent yearly in Sixteen thousand Dozens of those Chairs, about Two thousand Packs of Wool; which if that be true, (though it may well be questioned) Two thousand Dozens of Cane-Chairs, Stools, Squobs, and Couches, which is the most that is yearly used in *England* without Cushions or Quilts, cannot hinder more than Two hundred and Fifty Packs of Wool from being yearly wrought into Chairs throughout all *England*; which Detriment is very inconsiderable, to the Ruine and Destruction which the Bill for Preventing the Making of Cane-Chairs in *England*, if it should Pass into a Law, will unavoidably bring upon many Thousands of Their Majesties Subjects.

And whereas about Thirty Years ago there was One Dozen of Chairs covered with Velvet, Damask, Mohair, and other Silks, now there are Four Dozens covered as aforesaid; which also occasions less Wool to be worked into Chairs.

The Prohibiting of the Making and Vending of Cane-Chairs, Stools, and Couches, will certainly bring these Miseries upon Us, and Disadvantage to the Nation in general:

First, Cane-Chairs, Stools, Squobs and Couches, will be made in our Neighbouring Nations; whereby our Trades and Employments, as also that part of our *English* Merchandize, will be taken from the Free-born Subjects of *England*, and given to other Nations, by whom most parts of the World will be furnished with Cane-Chairs, Stools, Squobs, and Couches; which will prevent the Transportation of Turkey-work and Stuffed Chairs, and we may be furnished with Cane-Chairs, &c. from other Nations.

Secondly, There are several Thousand Persons, many whereof are Freemen of this Honourable City of *London*, whose Livelihood now depends upon Sawing, Making, Turning, Carving, and Caning of Chairs, Stools, Squobs, Couches, Tables, &c. which (if the same be Prohibited to be made in *England*) will certainly be destroyed; it being a certain Truth, That there will not be Employment for above One hundred and eighty Persons, One hundred and fifty Men being sufficient to make above Sixteen thousand Dozens of Frames for Turkey-work and other Stuffed Chairs in one Year, and fewer than Thirty Men can supply those Hundred and fifty Men with the Turned Work that is usually bestowed upon those Turkey-work Chair-Frames; and there is seldom or never any Carved Work bestowed upon them: So that Thousands of People will (by that Bill, if it should Pass into a Law) be forbid to Work at those Trades they have served an Apprenticeship of Seven Years unto. And by a Statute of the Fifth of *Eliz.* we are forbid to follow or work at any Handycraft Trade, unto which we have not served an Apprenticeship of Seven Years, under the Penalty of Forty Shillings for every Month; which must unavoidably prove the utter Ruine and Destruction of so many Free-born Subjects of *England*, all our Stocks being scarce sufficient to purchase our Discharges from those long Leases many of us have taken of Houses, for which we pay very great Rent.

✓ Wherefore we most humbly Pray, That according to your great Wisdom and Charity, you will be pleased to take our Case into your Serious Consideration, and not to take from us our Trades and Employments, whereunto we have been brought up, and by which we honestly Maintain our Selves and Families.